

Blue-green algae: Know it. Avoid it. Report it.

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality reminds residents that hot weather and accumulated nutrients can lead to blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) blooms in water bodies across the state. Blue-green algae can cause Harmful Algal Blooms, producing toxins in the water called cyanotoxins. Environmental Quality responds to reported blooms across the state and tests water for toxins. If toxins are at an unsafe level, Environmental Quality issues public advisories and warnings.

People that swallow or come into contact with water containing cyanotoxins can become sick with diarrhea and vomiting; or experience numb lips, tingling fingers and toes, dizziness, rashes, hives and skin blisters. Pets and livestock may also suffer adverse health effects, including death. There are no known antidotes for the cyanotoxins produced by blue-green algae. Children and pets are at a higher risk than adults for illness because of their smaller size.

Know it. Blue-green algae can look like grass clippings floating in the water, clumps/puffballs or green cottage cheese. It can also make the water appear like spilled green paint or green pea soup.

Avoid it.

- Respect advisories and warnings announced by Environmental Quality. The public can view all water advisories and warnings on the HABs story map by visiting www.tinyurl.com/WMP-HABS.
- Sign up for text alerts for HABs advisories at <https://tinyurl.com/NDhabsAlerts>.
- Do not swim, water ski, or boat in areas where the water is discolored or where you see foam, scum, or mats of green or blue-green algae on the water; or let pets swim in or drink from affected waters.
- If you or your pet accidentally swims in water that might have a cyanobacteria bloom, rinse off with fresh water as soon as possible.
- Do not irrigate lawns with pond or lake water that looks scummy or has a foul odor.

Report it. Report suspected blue-green algae blooms to Environmental Quality at 701-328-5210 or www.tinyurl.com/WMP-HABS. Because it can take time to receive laboratory test results, we urge people to be cautious and avoid waters that look discolored, scummy, or have a foul odor.

Enjoy a safe day on the lake, and *when in doubt, stay out.*

For more information contact:

Joshua Wert, Division of Water Quality
4201 Normandy St. | Bismarck, ND 58503-1324
PHONE: 701-328-5014 | EMAIL: jewert@nd.gov | www.deq-hab.gov